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The Rural Problem. By HENRY D. HARBEN. (London: Constable and Company, Ltd. 1913. Pp. vi, 169. 2s. 6d.)

This book is the first fruit of the Research Department established by the Fabian Society in 1912. While "most of the information" is the joint product of a "committee including men and women with a very special knowledge of certain aspects of country life," the writing of the report was done by Mr. Harben.

The rural problem is declared to be the raising of the countryman's status and the increasing of his opportunities. The workers of the land are in a "miserable plight," the agricultural laborer leading a life of "drudgery unequaled for its monotony and wretchedness." These conditions necessitate the raising of agricultural wages. For doing this the most direct and immediate method is a uniform minimum wage to be fixed by Parliament for all agricultural laborers. This is regarded as the key to the whole problem of rural development. The ordinary farm laborer must have his weekly earnings of 17s. 6d. increased to 23s. in order that he may obtain the barest necessities for a family of ordinary size. The burden of the minimum wage will fall chiefly on the landlord and will reduce his rent, it is thought, about one fourth.

The next most important thing in the solution of the rural problem is the community's acquisition of land. The Finance Act of 1909 could be developed so that the owner of an estate instead of being permitted to make payment of duty in kind could be required to give to the state an irredeemable mortgage in the case of death duties, thus instituting a policy of "gradually buying out landowners with their own money."

The state is to be called on for much other constructive legislation and for many grants from its exchequer. There should be established experimental farms, free farm schools, traveling agricultural instructors, and a state motor service. More money and more executive powers need to be given the Development Commission for extension of coöperation among the farmers. Loans from the exchequer should also be made for cottage building. Finally, as an agricultural reform, the government should acquire the ownership of railways.

The book contains a serviceable bibliography. The appendices, amounting to nearly one third of the work, seem needlessly full. From the standpoint of a socialist, the presentation is for the most part a logical discussion. The securing of a decent standard

of living for still the largest body of industrial workers must be regarded of prime importance. We must not quarrel with the author if in this case, as in so many other reforms that he discusses, he places much more reliance upon the efficacy of state action than upon individual or associative self-help. His method of nationalizing the land by buying out landowners with their own money is somewhat naïve. He strains his argument occasionally, as where he finds in the nationalization of railways the only escape from the farmers' railway difficulties.

The tone of the book is temperate and shows none of the immoderate arraignment of conditions sometimes found in writers opposed to private ownership of land and capital. The treatment, while not exhaustive, deals directly with fundamentals and is thought-provoking. It indicates definitely practical ways of passing over ultimately into socialism—if the people so desire.

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NEW BOOKS

AUGSTIN, M. *Die Entwicklung der Landwirtschaft in den Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika und ihr Einfluss auf die Preisbildung landwirtschaftliche Erzeugnisse.* (Munich: Duncker & Humblot. 1913. 4 M.)

BOCHALLI. *Die Wassergenossenschaften nach dem neuen preussischen Wassergesetze. Kommentar zum dritten Abschnitt des Wassergesetzes.* (Berlin: Parey. 1913. Pp. x, 241. 6 M.)

BRUCK, W. F. *Die Sisalkultur in Deutsch-Ostafrika.* (Berlin: Deutsche Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft. 1913. Pp. 70.)

ECKSTEIN, K. *Jahresbericht über die Fischereiliteratur, unfassend die Veröffentlichungen auf dem Gebiet der europäischen Binnenfischerrei das Jahr 1912.* (Neudamm: J. Neumann. 1913. Pp. 416. 7 M.)

ENGELBACH, H. *Notes et observations sur l'industrie houillière aux Etats-Unis.* (Paris: Contant-Laguerre. 1913. Pp. vi, 171.)

GIRAUT, A. *La réfection du cadastre.* (Paris: Larose & Tenin. 1913. Pp. 212. 3 frs.)

HANEY, L. H., editor. *Studies in agricultural economics.* Bulletin of the University of Texas, 298. (Austin: University of Texas. 1913. Pp. 132.)

This bulletin consists of thirteen essays prepared by the Texas Applied Economics Club. Among them are papers discussing rural credit, coöperative production and marketing by farmers, seasonal industries, the farm labor problem, farm tenure, and the relation of the services and rates of railways to the agricultural industry.